

Importance of the Meal Environment

Adapted from: Ellyn Satter Institute

Division of Responsibility

All babies are different.

Cues indicate what baby can do, not necessarily how old baby is.

When ready for solids, the caregiver is responsible for *what*, *when* and *where* baby eats their meals and snacks.

Baby is still, and always will be, responsible for *how much*, and even whether to eat all, some or any of the foods offered.

Make Mealtime a Positive Experience

- Make eating pleasant & enjoyable. Baby picks up on feelings, emotions & stress.
- Have structured times for meals & snacks. Try to be as consistent as possible day to day.
- Avoid distractions when baby is eating
 - * no TV, electronic devices, toys, etc.
- Allow baby to taste, touch & smell a variety of foods.
- Eat with baby.
- Set good role modelling around mealtime.
- Let baby grow into their body, the one that is right for them.



Caregiver

- Chooses what foods & prepares meals or snacks
- Provides meals & snacks
- Sets scheduled times for eating
- Demonstrates how to behave at mealtime
- Assists baby when needed
- Remains calm
- Sits with baby
- Pays attention to feeding cues & signs of fullness
- Trusts baby to know when they are full

Baby

- Decides how much to eat
- Eats the right amount for their hunger needs & body
- Will learn to eat the food you eat
- May try foods 10-15 times before enjoying them
- Looks to caregiver for role modelling at meals
- Provides verbal & non-verbal cues throughout the meal